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Methodological Considerations

I have been trying for some time to pull together in my own thinking two methodological problems confronting us in our work. One is putting ourselves in the mind of the Kremlin; the other is the approach to all topics via hypotheses.

Concerning the first problem, I think we can make considerable progress next year by following Ingersol's weekly report. Concerning the second matter, I think we can take our start from Sherman Kent's famous scale of probability and Paul Nitze's emphasis on the spectrum band of hypotheses. I would say that there are seven theoretical segments of the probability spectrum, ranging from absolute certainty to absolute impossibility. For our purposes, we can dismiss the two extremes as certain not to be applicable in this world in which we live. We therefore have five spectrum bands that need to be taken seriously:

- 1 - Highly probable (85-95%)
- 2 - Probable (60-85%)
- 3 - More or less even chances (40-60%)
- 4 - Improbable (15-40%)
- 5 - Highly unlikely (5-15%)

Without insisting too heavily on these categories, I think we could properly break down almost any analytical problem along these lines.

We can perhaps make a practical approach along these lines to what is undoubtedly our central problem, viz., the ultimate prospects for World Communism. Transposing ourselves to the standpoint of the Kremlin leaders, we might establish five sections to our situation report grouped as above. Each of these would be further broken down into a number of functional or topical categories. Tentatively I would suggest the following:

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- 1 - Ideological position
- 2 - Party organizational strength
- 3 - Leadership - stability of the collegium.
- 4 - Military position - strategic strengths and weaknesses, status of nuclear stalemate, defensive US offensive position, etc.
- 5 - Economic (actual rate of expansion of economy, prospects for catching up with US, ability to maintain economic offensive abroad, extent of liabilities in satellites and China, etc.).
- 6 - Diplomatic. Relaxation of tensions, position in UN, area strengths and weaknesses, moral position in points of world opinion.
- 7 - Relations with satellites. Level of stabilization - Tito, Gomulka, Kadar, Siroky. Agreements governing Soviet troops, degree of latitude in foreign policy, e. g. extensions on UN resolutions unfavorable to USSR, etc. Degree of concessions to demands for freedom, e. g. choice among preselected national front type candidates, degree of economic autonomy and opening to western economic contacts and assistance. Problem of anti-Russian sentiment in the satellites.
- 8 - Internal USSR problems. Social stratification and emergence of techno-bureaucrat elite, cultural ferment, effective higher education on the attitude of youth, ability to maintain iron curtain isolation in view of exchange programs, and wide awareness among Soviet population of falsity of Soviet propaganda.

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